Y9 Graphics: Pop Art

We're all familiar with the iconic images of Andy Warhol's Campbell's Soup cans and his multi-coloured screen prints of Marilyn Monroe, but there are plenty of interesting and surprising facts about Pop Art that you didn't know.

The facts:

- As the name suggests, Pop Art was unquestionably one of the most popular artistic movements of the contemporary art scene. Its prime reason for being was to act as a counter movement, a rebellion against the pretentious and over-intense style of the Abstract Expressionists.

- Another of Pop Art's intentions was to reflect the normality and reality of people's everyday lives; hence its plundering of images and concepts from magazines, comics and television.

- Pop Art was born in the UK in the mid 1950s but it didn't take long to reach the United States – by the late 50s it was already there. Its intention was to challenge everything about perceived ideas of tradition, and that visual aspects of mass media and popular culture could be considered art.

- Pop Art is primarily so effective because it extracts an image or idea from its familiar context and isolates it and associates it with other elements.

- Pop Art coincided with the Swinging 60s of London and its music scene – and resulted in a very happy and productive union. Peter Blake, for example, created cover art designs for Elvis Presley and The Beatles, and – like Andy Warhol incorporating Marilyn Monroe in his work - used actresses such as Brigitte Bardot.

- Andy Warhol's motto was: "I think everybody should be a machine." This was reflected in the way he created his prints, which looked as though they could have churned off a factory conveyor belt. American Pop Art was less subjective and referential than its British counterpart, being more aggressive and emblematic.

- Pop Art's finest and most well-known exponent, Andy Warhol, certainly predicted the future with his quote: "In the future, everybody will be famous for fifteen minutes." If only he could see the frightening reality of what his prediction would ultimately bring.

- As well as its use of advertising, comics and mass media, Pop Art's intention was to present the common-place and the straight forward in unique and exciting ways, very often through the use of irony.

- Pop artists primarily use the vivid colours red, blue and yellow in their works – the colours representing the references to popular culture as opposed to any inner feelings or emotions of what was being shown. It's a palette that also lent itself easily for mass reproduction, as was the case with Andy Warhol's silkscreen paintings.

- Roy Lichtenstein created his own unique Pop Art style inspired by the visual immediacy of comic books. Black outlines, bold colours, and Ben-Day dots were all recreated in the spirit of comic books that were printed in the 50s and 60s.

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